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PASS: CEA, TREAS, FRB

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: OECD, ECON

SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR OECD/INISTERIAL: JUNE 9
HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING ON SRATEGY FOR SUSTAINED
EXPANSION IN OECD AREA: PROSPECTS AND POLICIES

REF: (A) C(77)111; (B) OECD PARIS 13441; (C) OECD PARIS 16453; (D) OECD PARIS 16756; (E) STATE 132958

1. SUMMARY: AT JUNE9 HEADS OF DELEGATIONS MEETING, COUNTRIES HAD INITIAL, PRELIMINARY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REFDOC A (TRANSMITTED REFTEL C) WHICH WILL FORM BASIS FOR DISCUSSION OF MACRO-ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND POLICIES (AGENDA ITEM III) AT UNE 23-24 OECD MINISTERIAL MEETING WHILE MOST DELS WERE UINSTRUCTED ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES, DISCUSSION REVEALED POTENTIAL FOR CONSIDERABLE DIVERGENCE OF COUNTRIES' VIEWS ATJUNE 14-15 EPC ON IMPORTANT ISSUES, INCLUDING (A) DESIRABILITY OF SETTING 5 PERCENT TARGET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR GNP GROWTH IN 1978FOR OECD AREA AS WELL AS TARGETS FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH AGGREGATE TARGET. (MOST SMALLER COUNTRIES AND ITALIANS SUPPORTED CONCEPT OF TARGETING; THOSE LARGE COUNTRY REPS WHICH ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE TENDED TO BE SKEPTICAL.); (B) DEGREE OF PROMINENCE WHICH SHOULD BE GIVEN TO TUAC RECOMMENDATIONS (PUT FRWARD AT MAY 5 LIAISON COMMITTEE

MEETING, SEE REF B) IN REF A AND IN MINISTERIAL COMMUNI-QUE (PRO-TUAC POSITION/ED BY DANES; OPPOSITION BY FRG AND SWISS). SEVERAL DELS ASKED CLARIFICATION OF PROCESS BY WHICH SECRETARIAT ENVISIONED GROWTH TARGETS WOULDBE SELECTED AND MONITORED. SEVERAL PERMDELS FELT HOLDING OECD MINISTERIAL MEETING AT END OF THIS YEAR TO REVIW PROGRESS UNDER THISEXERCISE MIGHT BE "PREMATURE." THEY WERE, HOWEVER, WILLING TO SEE IDEA PRESENTED AS A POSSI-BILITY FOR MINISTERS TO CONSIDER. END SUMMARY

- 2. THE STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINED EXPANTION IN THE OECD AREA: PROSPECTS AND POLICIES (REF A): SECRETARIAT, MARRIS, SET STAGE FOR DISCUSSION OF REF A BY STRESSING THAT PROSPECTS THROUGH MID-1978 WERE FOR UNSATISFACTORY GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND RISING UNEMPLOYMENT (EXCEPT IN U.S.) AND FOR SLOW PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVEMENT OF SUS-TAINABLE INTRA-OECDPATTERN OF CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT. THUS, MINISTERIAL SHOULD ENDORSE TARGET FOR OECD AND GNPP GROWTH IN 1978 (I.E., 5 PERCENT) WHICH WOULD EXCEED GROWTH RATE FORECASTFOR 1977 (I.E., ABOUT 4 PERCENT). WHILE RECOGNIZING DIFFERENTIATION IN THAT SOME DEFICIT COUNTRIES MUST RESTRAIN DOMESTIC DEMAND. INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES WOULDBE ASKED TO SUBMIT GROWTH AND STABILIZA-TION TARGETS FOR 1978 TO A MONITORING PROCESS WHICH COULD CULMINATE/N REVIEW AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL AT END OF 1977.
- 3. MOST DELS WERE UNINSTRUCTED, BUT INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE READY TO COMMENT IN DETAIL ON SUBSTANCE OFREF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A AT JUNE 14-15/PC. NETHERLANDS DEL ASKED SEVERALQUESTIONS ABOUT THE /ROCESS ENVISIONED BY THE SECRETARIAT, INCLUDING WHETHER GROWTH TARGETS WOULD BE SET BY INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OPERATE AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. MARRIS INDICATED THAT TARGETS WOULD BE DETERMINED BY INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES, BUT WOULD BE REVIEWED AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL FOR CONSISTENCY, BOTH INTERNALLY AND WITH OVERALL GROWTH AND PRICE OBJECTIVES OF THE OECD AREA. RESOLUTION OF INCONSISTENCIES, MARRIS POINTED OUT, WOULD REQUIRE POLITICAL DECISIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY MINISTERS. SMALL COUNTRIES (MINUS AUSTRALIA) TENDED TO SUPPORT IDEA OF TARGETING. ITALIANS VIEWED THIS PROPOSAL AS EFFECTIVE MEANS TO TIGHTEN THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC

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COOPERATION IN GENERL AND TO BRING ABOUT SYMMETRICAL SITUATION IN WHICHDOMESTIC POLICIES OF STRONG AS WELL AS WEAK COUNTRIES COULD BE INFLUENCED AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. CANADIANS AND AUSTRALIANS EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM ABOUT PROPOSAL TO TABLISH TARGETS FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES AND, IN ADDITION, ARGUED THAT AGGREGATE GROWTH TARGET OF 5 PERCENT IN 78 SUGGESTED BY SECRETARIAT WOULD LIKELY BE INCONSISTENT WITH NEED TO RE UCE INFLATION RATE. FRG SUPPORTED THIS VIEW AND UNDERLINED SUMMIT CONCLUSION THAT INFLATION IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

4. RE SUGGESTION THT MINISTERIAL SHOULD BE HELD AT EN OF THIS YEAR TO REVIEW TARGETS AS WELL AS MONITORING PRCESS PROPOSED TO BE UDERTAKEN UNDER AUSPICES OF EPC, SEVERAL DELEGATES (DUCH, JAPANESE, FRENCH, GERMANS) SUGGESTED THAT MINISTRIAL MEETING FOR THIS PURPOSE AT END OF THIS YEAR WOULBE "PREMATURE." (DUTCH ALSO FELT SUCH REVIEW WOULD BE ORE APPROPRIATELY DONE BY EPC.) THEY WERE, HOWEVER, WLLING TO SEE PROPOSAL BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF MINISTESR.

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5. SEVERAL SMALL COUNTRIES(LED BY DANES) FELT THAT POLICY PROPOSALS PUT FORWAL BY TUAC AT MAY 5 LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING (REFTEL/ SHOULD FIGURE MORE PROMI-

NENTLY IN REF A AND IN MINITERIAL COMMUNIQUE. FRG AND SWISS RESISTED THIS PROPOSA NOTING THAT OECD WAS AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZAION. THUS, VIEWS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIORS SUCH AS TUAC AND BIAC SHOULD BE REFLECTED ONLY INSOFAR AS NATIONAL GOERNMENTS HAD TAKEN THEIR VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT IN FORMULATING THEIR OWN POSITIONS AND POLICIES. SECRETARIAT REMINDED DELS THAT MAIN TUAC PROPOSAL WAS FOR AN AGGREGAE OECD AREA GROWTH RATE OVER MEDIUM-TERM (7 PERCENT) WHICH MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WOULD CONSIDER INFLATIONARY. INADITION, TUAC ANALYSIS, UNLIKE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS, HAD LARGELY IGNORED INFLATION PROBLEM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X

Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am Channel Indicators: n/a

Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Concepts: MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, COMMITTEES, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT, MEETING REPORTS

Control Number: n/a

Copy: SINGLE Sent Date: 09-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am Decaption Note:

Disposition Action: RELEASED Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW

Disposition Date: 22 May 2009 Disposition Event:

Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS17096
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00

Drafter: n/a Enclosure: n/a Executive Order: N/A

Errors: N/A **Expiration:**

Film Number: D770206-0700

Format: TEL

From: PARIS USOECD Handling Restrictions: n/a

Image Path: ISecure: 1

Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770673/aaaacmft.tel Line Count: 183

Litigation Code IDs: Litigation Codes:

Litigation History: Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM Message ID: fc251782-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Office: ACTION EUR

Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE Original Handling Restrictions: n/a Original Previous Classification: n/a Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a

Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OECD PARIS 13441, 77 OECD PARIS 16453, 77 OECD PARIS 16756, 77 STATE 132958

Retention: 0

Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED Review Content Flags: Review Date: 02-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am

Review Event: Review Exemptions: n/a

Review Media Identifier: Review Release Date: n/a Review Release Event: n/a **Review Transfer Date:** Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a

SAS ID: 2214184 Secure: OPEN Status: NATIVE

Subject: PREPARATIONS FOR OECD/INISTERIAL: JUNE 9 HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING ON SRATEGY FOR SUSTAINED EXPANSION IN

OECD AREA: PROSPECTS AND POLICIES TAGS: ECON, OECD

To: STATE Type: TE

vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fc251782-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc Review Markings:

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Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009